(d) what steps are being taken to ensure that minimum damage is caused to agricultural during such calamities in future ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR) : (a) According to reports received from the Government of Maharashtra, crops in an area of 2.20 lakh ha. were affected in the Vidarbha region due to floods during the south-west Monsoon, 1994.

'b) and (c) Government of Maharashtra had submitted two Memoranda seeking Central assistance to the tune of Rs. 945.00 crores for relief and rehabilitation measures in the areas affected by floods in the State. Under the existing scheme, the State Government undertakes relief and rehabilitation measures using the corpus of the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF). The entire Central share of CRF amounting to Rs. 33.00 crores for the year 1994-95 was released in advance during 1993-94.

(d) The subject of flood control is a State subject. The State Government has implemented 18 major, 48 medium and 517 minor irrigation projects which also contribute to checking flood damage to Agriculture and other sectors.

Negative aspects of the rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992

*155. DR. BAPU KALDATE

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA :

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

l£(a) whether the non-Governmental organisations have, in a memorandum submitted to Government, pointed out negative aspects of the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 pleading the suspension of the implementation of the Act being contrary to the interests of the handicapped;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what is the reaction of Government with regard thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main points raised in the Memorandum submitted by the NGOs are as follows:

(i) *Article* 2 *of the RCI Act* : Categories of ll c disabilities are not adequately covered.

(ii) *Article* 3(3) : The composition of the Council needs change in order to include established professionals in the field as well as to give adequate representation to the NGOs.

(iii) *Article* 11 *and* 18 : Established and reputed universities should be left out of the purview of the RCI Act to encourage academic higher education in rehabilitation.

(iv) *Article* 13 : Prescribing rehabilitation qualifications for professionals should be repealed to avoid centralisation and bureaucratisation.

(c) The issues were earlier considered in detail with the representatives of the NGOs. At this stage, any amendment of the Act is not under consideration. However, Government is open to consider the provisions of the Act, if in its implementation, difficulties arise without affecting the qaulity of Rehabilitation Services for welfare of the handicapped.

Status of Women in South Asia

*156 SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news item captioned "Women status low in South Asia" which appeared in the Times of India dated 31st August, 1994; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of Government thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

Status oj women in South Asia

The news item refers to a World Bank publication entitled "A New Agenda for Women's Health and Nutrition", published in August, 1994. This publication is a general study focussing on the health and nutrition related deprevations faced by women and girl children in developing countries including India. It suggests that gender sensitive policies should be adopted and women's health services strengthened, along with efforts to redress